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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

MONDAY, APRIL 24, 2007

In Today's Papers

Erdogan Names Gul as Presidential Candidate

Breaking News: Prime Minister Erdogan announced Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul would be the AKP candidate for president before noon on Tuesday at an extraordinary session of the party's decision board.

Today's papers were reporting Erdogan said the new president would be a member of the ruling AK Party and also a member of parliament. He also said the party's candidate would be a "conciliatory figure."

On Sunday, Erdogan had met Parliament Speaker Bulent Arinc and Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul separately to decide who would be their presidential candidate.

Abdullah Gul, 56, is a former economics professor known to be a capable and reform-minded politician who has overseen Turkey's drive to join the European Union. A fluent English speaker, Gul has studied at British universities. His wife wears the Muslim headscarf.

Parliament chooses the president in a series of up to four votes. In the first and second rounds, a candidate must receive 367 votes, or two thirds of all deputies, to win. In the third round, only a simple majority of 276 votes is needed. If no candidate can secure support in the third round, a fourth and final vote is held. In the unlikely event of no candidate winning in the final round, parliamentary elections are called. The AKP candidate is expected to win in the third round. The first round of voting will be held April 27 and the new president will be sworn in on May 16.

Turkey Calls for Joint Historian Commission

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report Turkey placed advertisements in major US newspapers (New York Times, Washington Post, Washington Times, LA Times, International Herald Tribune, and Roll Call) inviting Armenia to establish a Turkey-Armenia joint historian committee to examine facts regarding

the claims of the mass killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turkish troops in 1915.

Larijani-Solana to Meet in Turkey

Hurriyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Yeni Safak and others report EU's foreign policy chief Javier Solana and Iran's chief nuclear negotiator Ali Larijani will meet in Ankara. Turkey will not join the meeting. Hurriyet reports the meeting will happen April 25. Cumhuriyet says during a visit last week to Ankara, Iranian Foreign Minister Mottaki asked Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul to arrange a meeting between Solana and Larijani. Cumhuriyet sees it as another Iranian effort to soften the pressure of UN sanctions through dialogue with EU. The Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) said in a statement Tuesday that Larijani and Solana "will be holding talks in Ankara on April 25 and 26 regarding the Iranian nuclear issue."

Zebari May Visit Turkey before Iraq's Neighbors Conference

The intellectual/Islamist-oriented Zaman reports Iraq's Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zebari wants to call on Ankara after traveling to Tehran on Wednesday in an effort to seek Iranian support for an upcoming expanded Iraq's neighbors conference in Egypt. Zebari is expected to visit Damascus as well. Turkish diplomatic sources confirmed the Zebari request, says Zaman, adding no date was set yet.

Ambassador David Satterfield Visits Ankara

The liberal daily Radikal reported Saturday the US special Iraq coordinator Ambassador David Satterfield paid a visit to Ankara to meet with Turkey's Iraq envoy Oguz Celikkol, Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) Undersecretary Ertugrul Apakan, and the second chief of the Turkish General Staff (TGS) Ergin Saygun. Satterfield told the Turks the US respects TGS chief General Yasar Buyukanit, but maintains hope that there will be no need for military operations

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against the PKK in northern Iraq. "The responsibility for taking forward steps in the Kurdish region falls on the Kurdish leaders, and no one else," said Satterfield in an interview on CNN-Turk. He stressed the US is not responsible for the statements made by the regional Kurdish administration president Barzani. With regard to demands for putting off a planned referendum on Kirkuk, Satterfield said the ways to resolve the problem were mentioned in the Iraqi constitution. Satterfield also noted the decision to hold the expanded Iraq's neighbors' foreign ministers meeting in Egypt instead of Istanbul was made by the Iraqi government, says Radikal.

Editorial Commentary on Satterfield Meetings in Ankara

Murat Yetkin wrote in the liberal-intellectual daily Radikal: "Americans seem to realize that the rhetoric of 'PKK is a terrorist organization and let's resolve this issue through dialogue' has lost its influence over Ankara during the last two years. In this context, Satterfield told a group of reporters in Ankara, referring to the Kurdish regional government, that 'if you claim control over a region, then you cannot just say that you are responsible for certain things and not responsible for some others.' The US stands opposed to a military operation by Turkey but its stance has also shifted toward giving a chance to the Iraqi Kurdish leadership to prevent PKK activities rather than advising Ankara to talk to the Iraqi Kurds. When Satterfield was asked whether Barzani would keep his promises, he emphasized that the 'Kurdish leadership will prove their leadership.' Satterfield listed the closure of PKK offices, shutting down the PKK leadership and stopping PKK activities as examples of concrete developments in the foreseeable future.

Since he used 'as soon as possible' to define the time limit, reporters asked him to be more specific. He did not want to answer this question directly but answering another question he said, 'as soon as possible does not mean months.' Given the nature of our conversation, we tend to believe that he refers to a couple of weeks. Let's wait and see then."

Fehmi Kuru wrote in the Islamist-intellectual Yeni Safak: "American officials have heard many times both from civilians and from the military messages related to the need for cross-border operations against PKK. It seems the US has finally got the point. David

Satterfield, after having a series of meetings in Ankara, told four journalists that 'We understand and accept Turkey's sensitivities completely. The Northern Iraqi administration should fulfill its responsibility.'

The US is very well aware of the need to conquer hearts and minds in Turkey. Now it remains to be seen to what extent those big goals vis-à-vis the Iraqi Kurds will be achieved. Will the US be able to make Iraqi Kurds end the PKK's presence there? Satterfield was talking about weeks. It is now the time to wait and see."

TV News:
(NTV, 8 A.M.)

Domestic News

- Celebrations have been held across Turkey to mark April 23, Children's Day and National Sovereignty Holiday.
- US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has refrained from meeting with a Turkish parliamentary delegation visiting the US to discuss Armenian genocide charges, but last week Turkish Ambassador in Washington Nabi Sensoy had an opportunity to meet Pelosi to discuss the matter.
- One Turkish soldier has been killed in Sirnak and another one in Hatay during clashes with PKK terrorists.
- Turkey kicks off test runs between Ankara and Eskisehir of an

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Italian-made high-speed train.

- Over the last ten years, the share of EU countries in Turkish exports has increased from 49.7 percent to 51.6.

International News

- Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has ordered the US military in Baghdad to stop the construction of a controversial wall built around the Sunni neighborhood of Adhamiya.
- Secretary Rice said she wants Iran to attend an upcoming international Iraq meeting in Egypt.
- Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh rejected the resignation of Palestinian security chief who wanted to step down citing lack of progress in implementing his new security plan.
- Three car bombs killed 15 in the Sunni stronghold of Ramadi on Monday.

WILSON